

**"Rethinking Western Strategies Toward Pakistan: *An Action Agenda For The United States And Europe*" Frederic Grare's Study At Carnegie Endowment For International Peace (Washington: July 2007)**

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The study on Pakistan released at Carnegie Endowment July 2007, gives a three-fold treatment of Pakistan's role vis-à-vis the West's war on terror. First, the report calls into question the Pakistani elite's intent and willingness to comply with the Western agenda regarding the fight on terror. Second, it finds organic linkages between Pakistani military's role, vision and interests on one hand, and the process that germinates and unfolds militancy on the other. Third, it argues that the Western interests would be best served with Pakistan's "demilitarization" and move towards a democratic culture. The study has been released amidst a spate of other documents and statements (e.g. US Intelligence Estimation Report) on the subject which speak of Pakistan's deficient compliance in the war, although with varying emphasis.

To recap essential details, it is noteworthy that the report while questioning Pakistan's perceived failings in the way of "fullest possible cooperation", raises questions as to "whether Pakistani state is merely unable to do better or is actively undermining international efforts in Afghanistan and against terrorism". In turn, it blames Pakistan for the worsening security situation in Afghanistan, the resurgence of Taliban (besides "terrorism in Kashmir") and for the "growth of Jihadi ideology internationally". The blame is squarely placed on Pakistani military and on what is seen as its overriding control over the levers of power in the country. It claims that the army has developed over the years "nationalism based more on its own delusions of grandeur than on any rational analysis of the country's national interest". In discussing the perceived root cause, the study contends that the army elite gained strength over the years in the wake of most Western nations' pursuit of short term interests. Pakistani priorities therefore reflect the army's institutional interests. In a nutshell, the authors' hopes for a change would come true when the army gradually ceded its political role to representative civilian

leaders. The study therefore, calls for a new strategy to encourage re-establishment of civilian pre-eminence.

The Carnegie Endowment study, together with other documents in circulation, bring a renewed focus on what was regarded as a "forgotten (Afghan) war", especially after the US engagement in Iraq. They all speak of the safe havens on Pakistan's frontiers that are "regenerating" militancy and "radiating" it to a larger world, threatening the Western interests. The Carnegie product though loaded with negative overtones, holds common ground with other contemporary American documents at least on two counts. Firstly, it carries an implicit acknowledgment that six years after 9/11, the US Administration is unable to show a credible report card and now, it is faced with a complex situation in the wake of the rise of Democrats in the Congress. Secondly, Pakistan is seen as central to the success or failure of the Western engagement. It does acknowledge that the US Administration is not eager to put disproportionate pressure on Pakistan because of its possible ramifications. At one point, it acknowledges that today Pakistan is, in a "unique position of helping both belligerents"(Taliban as well as the Allies).

The report is myopic in major parts in its understanding of Pakistan's strategic interests and leaves the reader with an unmistakable impression of a venomous treatment that it gives to the institution of Pakistani armed forces. It ignores the fact that the jihadi culture at the very outset was born of the West's war against the Soviets. It resents that Pakistan's survival strategy continues to take India factor into full account. For example, the country's military acquisition program, resting upon \$10 billion worth US assistance, has remained India-specific (Pakistan made no effort to gain anti-insurgency assistance). It also resents that while making compliance with the western demands, Pakistan continues to make distinction between Al Qaeda and Taliban. It raises questions if Pakistan's post 9/11 move was a strategic decision or a tactical shift.

The study prescribes that Pakistan's "demilitarization" and move towards democratic culture are pre-requisites for long term stability in the region. The corrective measures should be unfolded

preparatory to electoral process 2007-08 and carried forward thereafter. The process should aim at reestablishing civilian power, with military playing a subordinate role. It is the democratic culture and the civilian primacy that would offer popular mobilization and contain militancy. The West should therefore, adopt a package of incentives and sanctions to promote the process. The assistance should aim at focusing on areas of US interest, and to condition assistance with results.

No doubt, the renewed focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan's role speaks of the US administration's need to find ways of bridging the credibility gap that it faces in the overall failure in the so called war on terror, particularly the Iraqi debacle. The rise of Democrats in the US Congress and a short time span from now till the next Presidential election, reinforce the need to produce a better report card. Some hopes lay on greater engagement from Pakistan. As far the call for greater democratic culture, it may be a welcome opportunity from the standpoint of Pakistani interest that is focussed on institution building and assuring transparent elections on schedule. It may also be the time to find greater reliance on democratic institutions to define and interpret the national interest and set the of direction of the policies that are carried. However, the US accent on democracy, judged from their own track record, is misplaced from the standpoint of the time-tested American interests.

How far can Government of Pakistan comply with the current US demand to "do more" without serious destabilization of its own society and without prejudice to its own long term interests? We can perhaps keep the Bush Administration constructively engaged within the broader rules of game employed since 9/11. However, we need to review our preparedness for a response from the mid-term point of view, especially keeping in view a future Democratic Administration in Washington.

The Endowment does not speak for the US Government, but carries the profile and standing across the American political spectrum that is crucial to influence the policy formulation process. Moreover, the report is significant in its timing in as much as it relates to intra US politics as well as the upcoming electoral process

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in Pakistan. The report should therefore be taken seriously in spite of its subjective overtones.

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